



BILL FINCH
Mayor

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT
MARGARET E. MORTON GOVERNMENT CENTER

999 BROAD STREET
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT 06604
TELEPHONE (203) 576-7201
FAX (203) 576-3913

February 25, 2015

Committee on Education
Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 3100
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: SB 943: AN ACT CONCERNING CHARTER SCHOOL MODERNIZATION AND REFORM

Dear Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on an act concerning charter school modernization and reform.

As the mayor of our state's largest city, and as the father for four kids who have attended Bridgeport public schools, I'm personally invested in ensuring every child has access to a high-quality education.

In Bridgeport, we are doing everything to make sure our kids are prepared for college and to compete for 21st-century jobs.

In order to do just that, we're focused on getting more kids access to pre-k and building new schools to ensure our kids learn in the right environment.

We're also fighting to receive more funding from the state, which is critical for teachers and administrators to have the resources necessary to give our kids the education they deserve.

The state legislature and Governor Malloy have made tremendous progress on education over the past several years, which includes growing high-quality public school options in Bridgeport and other cities.

High-quality public school options – including traditional, magnet, and charter schools – are helping to increase the amount of kids who are college and career ready.

And, many public charters are outperforming other options across the state, helping kids who need it most get access to the high-quality education they deserve.

With that said, we need to ensure all public schools are held accountable for their actions, including public charters.

We're not the only state that has encountered accountability issues over the past year, but that's all the more reason to address this issue.

So we need to do better. States like New Hampshire and Washington are doing better on this front, and we should join them.

That's why I support these efforts to enhance accountability, increase oversight, bolster quality control, and strengthen background checks.

I strongly believe public charters need to be part of the equation that will result in more and more kids across our state being prepared to attend college and compete for 21st-century jobs.

And, I believe this legislation provides the framework for public charters to play that key role in Connecticut's public education system for generations to come.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Finch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Finch
Mayor of Bridgeport